

## Introduction

The objective of the Village of Fayetteville Deer Management Plan (VFDMP) is to safely and effectively reduce the white-tailed deer (*Odocoileus virginianus*) population within the Village of Fayetteville, New York, to address the following issues:

1. Increase in Lyme disease within Village residents and pets
2. Negative impacts to natural plant communities
3. Frequent deer-vehicular accidents within the Town of Manlius
4. Property damage from white-tailed deer; including, but not limited to residential landscapes

The ultimate success of this program is defined as reaching a deer population density of eight (8) or fewer per square mile within the Village limits. Numerous studies have shown significant reductions in tick density following a reduction in deer density, with other hosts present. Other measures of success, because they imply progress towards the ultimate goal of eight (8) or fewer deer per square mile, will include:

1. Reduced risk of new Lyme disease incidents, as measured by tick drags or other means
2. Reduced impacts to natural plant communities, as measured by sentinel plantings or other means
3. Reduced deer-vehicle collisions
4. Reduced property damage as reported by Village residents

This VFDMP will serve as a document Village officials, program participants, and Village residents can turn to for general guidance, rationales for management decisions, and answers to procedural questions. This wildlife management policy is not a program designed to permit recreational hunting within the Village.

The Deer Committee anticipates that the process of managing the deer population within the Village will be a long-term project that will utilize adaptive management to accommodate changing conditions and lessons learned. Furthermore the Deer Committee anticipates the success of this program is dependent upon the following:

1. Assistance from professional wildlife management organization(s)
2. Utilization of multiple management approaches and supplements
3. Transition from "initial phase" which is anticipated to rely primarily on culling, to a "maintenance phase" which will utilize non-lethal measures to the greatest extent possible

To ensure the safety of persons and property as well as the quick and humane cull of deer, all NYS, Village and VFDMP rules and regulations must be followed. A small group of proficient participants who are Village residents or otherwise closely connected with the Village, or are hired by the Village, and who successfully complete the permit application process (see Village of Fayetteville Participant Permit

Application Packet) or, in the case of hired wildlife management professionals, otherwise demonstrate proficiency by a method more arduous than defined in this document, will be selected. Participants will most likely (see below) use compound bows or crossbows exclusively. Only antlerless deer will be targeted.

If the event that the Village hires wildlife management professionals to participate in the VFDMP, the professionals may prefer to use rifles to cull deer. If so, the Fayetteville Deer Committee will consider and may grant them the right to do so, provided that the Village determines it is legal to do so.

## **Managed Culling Procedures**

### **Participant Application Process and Selection**

The participant application and selection process is designed to enlist proficient individuals that are capable of confidently and safely reducing the deer herd within the Village as humanely as possible. With the exception of hired wildlife management professionals, all participants in the VFDMP must complete the following requirements (as outlined in the participant application packet):

- 1) Proof of residency within the Town of Manlius or a contiguous town.
- 2) Provide a copy of his/her driver's license
- 3) Provide the Village Clerk with the original copy of current NYS hunting license
- 4) Provide the Village Clerk with the original copy of either a) current bow hunting privilege, or b) valid bow hunter education certificate
- 5) Provide completed Participant Application for Deer Management Program
- 6) Provide completed Participant Signature Page, stating they have read and will abide by all rules and regulations
- 7) Provide completed Waiver and Release of Liability
- 8) Provide the completed Archery Proficiency Test page accompanied with stamped and signed target
- 9) Submit to a background check

Deer management tag(s) will be issued to qualified participants on a first-come, first-served basis, and will be granted by the NYSDEC. Participant applications will be reviewed and accepted or rejected by the Village of Fayetteville Deer Committee. Preference will be given to individuals who live near the designated deer management areas.

If compound bows or crossbows are used, approved participants will be given a unique six digit code that is to be written in permanent marker on the cock fletching (vane) of every arrow taken afield. This code will only be known by the Village and the participant, and will serve to provide an identifier between a deer and the participant as well as, in the unlikely event that this happens, to identify deer that are shot within the Village by persons not permitted by this program.

Participants will agree to report any form of harassment to the Town of Manlius Police Department.

### **Dates and Times**

- The deer management season within the Village is anticipated to start on or about December 23, 2015 and run through March 2016.

- All culling activities within Village limits are to take place between one hour before legal sunset and 11:00pm.
- The Village of Fayetteville Deer Management Committee will regularly review the success of the program and shorten or extend the season based on deer harvest numbers.
- The exact times stands will be used cannot be predicted in advance as it is dependent on wind direction, participant schedules and weather.

### **Safety Considerations**

- Top priority of all culling activities will be to protect the safety of participants, property owners, property, pets, other wildlife, and bystanders.
- Participants are required to wear properly functioning safety harness and utilize a lifeline at any moment they leave the ground to prevent falls from tree stands while climbing, descending, or in the stands.
- All shots must be either broadside or quartering away and well within the participant's comfort level.
- Maximum shot distance is 25 yards.
- Participants will not be under the influence of drugs or alcohol. The Village has a zero tolerance policy for individuals under the influence of alcohol or drugs.
- Participants must follow motto of "when in doubt, don't shoot".

### **Establishment of Bait Stations and Stand Locations**

A representative from the NYSDEC and the Village Deer Management Committee will inspect all deer management areas where culling activities are proposed. Culling activities will take place from ladder-style tree stands with a minimum height of 12 feet (participant feet) above ground level. Bait (corn) will be placed in appropriate locations within 25 yards of stands within 3 weeks prior to culling activities for the purposes of attracting deer. A few small branches or other small vegetation may be trimmed to improve shooting lanes. Tree stand locations may be moved slightly or abandoned depending on cull success and observations of participants. Trail cameras may be installed to monitor deer activity to target the best possible times to utilize specific locations. Use of supplemental red lights will allow for safe, highly accurate shots at close range.

It is the right of each landowner to restrict the number of individuals on their property, the times and dates participants are allowed on properties, stand locations, baiting locations and access routes. The agreement to use properties can be terminated by landowners at any time by contacting the Village Clerk.

### **Tracking, Field Dressing, and Processing of Deer**

It is understood that despite all precautions and skill, deer may be wounded, may not expire immediately, may expire on neighboring properties or may not be found. Every effort possible will be made, possibly including the use of trained dogs, to recover all animals or assure that they suffered only a superficial wound that will quickly heal.

When possible, participants will have pre-authorization to retrieve deer from adjoining properties. All participants will have the names and phone numbers of neighbors should they need to be contacted

regarding deer retrieval. In most instances landowners/neighbors will not notice activities or deer harvest because it happens quickly and quietly.

Participants may use flashlights to track deer after they are shot or when traveling to/from tree stands; therefore, property owners may notice slow moving lights. In very rare circumstances tracking operations may continue the following morning with better light. In the event a deer is wounded and mobile, or has expired on a property that the participant does not have pre-approved access onto, the Town of Manlius Police will be contacted to assist in locating and/or collecting the deer.

Once a deer is recovered, it is to be removed discreetly and field dressed at the Village of Fayetteville DPW. Deer may then be transported to a venison processing facility. All harvested deer will be consumed by landowners, or participants, or donated to local food banks and pantries.

### **Program Review Activities**

The Fayetteville Deer Management Committee will meet regularly during the program to review activities and to determine if the program should continue or be terminated. The Deer Management Committee will provide regular updates to the Village Board and the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation.

A process will be developed and implemented to estimate the population density of deer within the Village.

### **Public Notification and Citizen Input**

The views of local citizens, businesses and interest groups are valuable and will help shape the VFDMP. The development, implementation and review of this program are to be transparent and involve citizen input at every step. The public is encouraged to attend and participate at Village Board meetings and public information meetings.

Village residents will be sufficiently notified of the upcoming deer management program via press releases that will be published in local newspapers, the Village newsletter, and postings on the Village website.

### **Description of Deer Management Areas**

Deer Management Areas (DMA's) are defined as properties located within the Village of Fayetteville where culling activities are to take place during the VFDMP per NYSDEC deer damage (nuance) permit. DMA's may include but are not limited to parks, land preserves, commercial and private properties and other village/town properties. All DMA's will have the written consent of the owner for culling activities and adjacent properties will be notified.

An abundance of private property owners within densely populated areas within the Village have come forward seeking participants to cull deer herds that frequent their properties. Many of these properties are sought out by deer as areas of refuge. While many of these properties offer high densities of deer, safety needs to be the priority and it is necessary that groupings of property owners give consent to be included as DMA's.

## **Alternatives to the VFDMP - Nonlethal Methods**

### **Fencing**

Fencing prohibits deer movement via physical barrier. To be effective, fencing must be a minimum of ten feet in height and not possess any openings. This option is not feasible due to the large geographic area of the Village and installation and maintenance costs.

### **Habitat Alteration**

The practice of habitat alteration as a method of white-tailed deer population control would involve altering the vegetative landscape within the village to reduce or eliminate species that deer use for forage and/or shelter. This option is not viable as the extensive habitat alteration and coordination of the village and property owners is not feasible.

### **Capture and Relocate**

The practice of capture and relocate as a method of white-tailed deer population control would involve reducing the deer herd within the Village by capturing deer and moving them elsewhere. This option is not viable as the NYSDEC prohibits the trapping of deer except under special permit for scientific purposes.

### **Fertility Control**

Immuno-contraception and surgical sterilization techniques have been employed by some townships in an effort to reduce white-tailed deer populations. When used solely this option is not viable as these techniques have not proven effective in controlling wild populations of deer (Bishop et. al., 2007). However, surgical sterilization may prove to be a valuable management option when used as a component of a larger management strategy, specifically surgical sterilization of deer located in densely populated areas of the Village.

### **Management Supplements**

Management supplements are actions that, while they do not affect the deer population directly, help work towards the program's success. Examples of management supplements members of the Deer Committee are reviewing are:

- Removal of Village ban on chicken hens and guinea hens, as they are documented as an effective control of ticks.
- Utilization of Pyrethrum deer feeding stations, as they are documented as an effective control of ticks.

The Deer Committee will continue to search for any practical management supplement that will help work towards this programs success.

## **Alternatives to the VFDMP - Lethal Methods**

### **Predator Introduction**

The introduction of coyotes, or other larger predators, poses a severe safety concern for Village residents and is not a viable option.

### **Parasite or Disease Introduction**

The risks and uncertainties associated with parasite or disease introduction make it an impractical option for deer population control (Bishop Et. al., 2007).

### **Poison**

Currently there are no toxins, poisons or lethal baits registered for deer control (Bishop Et. al., 2007). Furthermore there are no safe methods of delivering lethal doses within the Village limits.

### **Capture and Kill**

The Capture and kill management option falls under the same constraints as “capture and relocation” previously described. Furthermore, the level of effort and risk of injury to biologists eliminates this as a viable option.

### **Traditional Hunting**

Traditional hunting utilizes firearms and archery methods to shoot and kill white-tailed deer. Sportsmen and women must adhere to hunting regulations and seasons as set by the NYSDEC, and pass an education course(s) before purchasing their hunting license(s). While traditional hunting has proven effective at controlling white-tailed deer populations, the use of guns is unwise in the densely populated Village. Furthermore, it is likely that deer management would be more effective utilizing a more tailored approach that would meet the specific conditions of the Village.

### **Controlled and Bait-and-Shoot Hunting**

The bait-and-shoot hunting technique involves baiting deer to strategic locations where a shooter could then kill the deer. Controlled hunting involves tailoring hunts to meet a variety of local conditions. These options are useful within the Village limits where there is not enough land available for traditional hunting methods to be employed. Additionally, these methods provide the benefit of instilling a heightened awareness in any remaining deer, thus making them less likely to inhabit the Village.

Controlled hunts are limited to the open hunting season using the individual’s carcass tags and do not allow for the use of bait. Local municipalities that have performed deer management activities report greater success culling deer post hunting season over bait, when deer group and have fewer food resources.

Controlled hunts may be a viable option in situations where they can be performed legally and safely. Furthermore, controlled hunts could move deer from previous areas of refuge, including areas not suitable for the VFDMP. This option deserves consideration and could be a supplement to the VFDMP.

#### **NYSDEC DMAP Program**

Under the deer management assistance program (DMAP) the NYSDEC issues a special permit and determined number of deer tags to a landowner or resource manager, or a group of landowners or resource managers whose property is in need of site specific deer management efforts (NYSDEC, 2015). This program will be available to Village residents bordering Green Lakes State Park during the open hunting season of 2016. This option deserves consideration and could be a supplement to the VFDMP.

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